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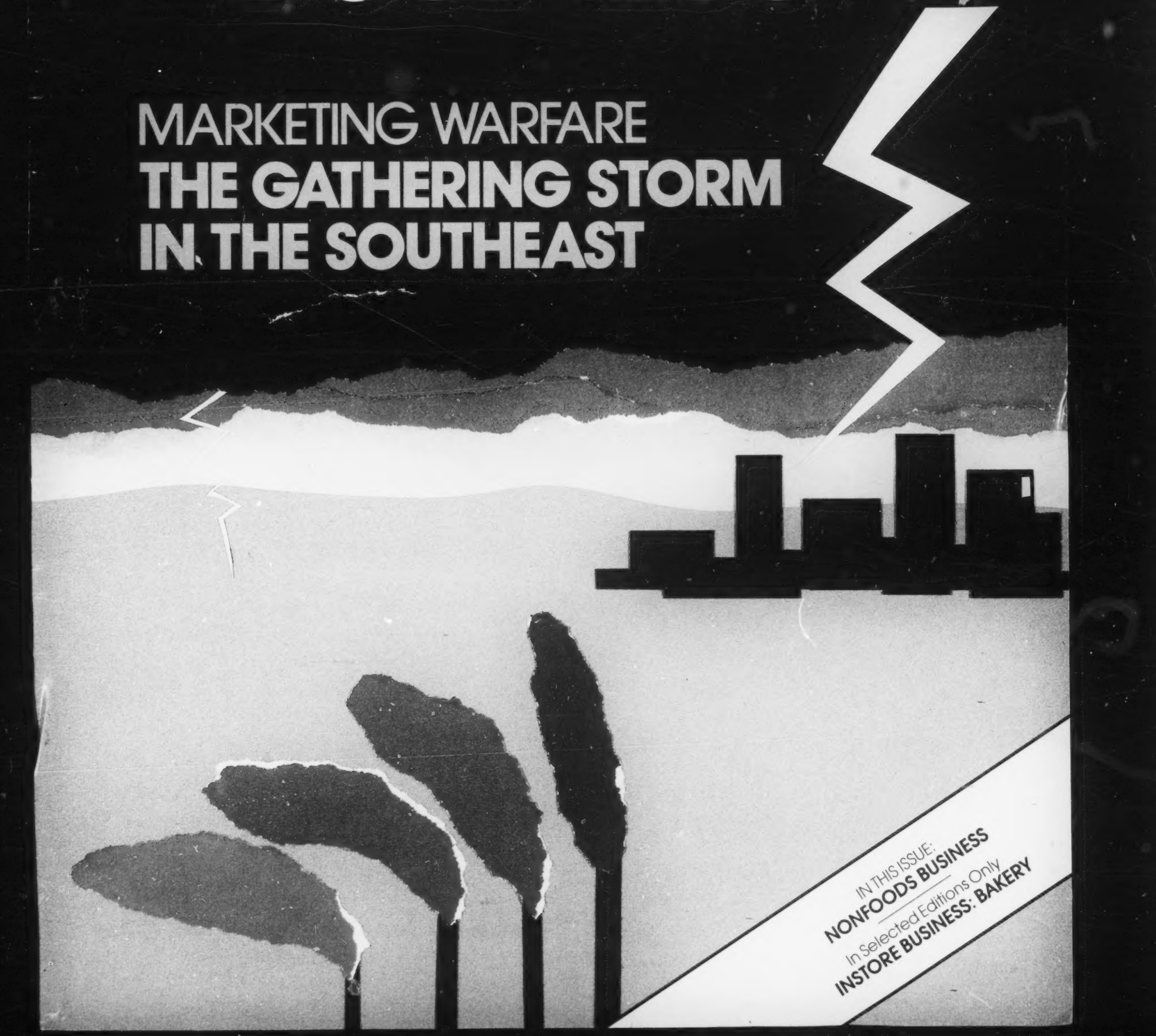
SUPERMARKET BUSINESS

$4.00
PER COPY

PART ONE
OF TWO PARTS

VOLUME 42/NUMBER 11
NOVEMBER 1987

MARKETING WARFARE
THE GATHERING STORM IN THE SOUTHEAST



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In Selected Editions Only
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CONTRIBUTING EDITORS:
Marketing: **Len Dayklin**
Produce: **Barney S. McClure**
Technology: **Richard Shulman**
Store Planning: **David Rogers**
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SALES DEVELOPMENT MANAGER:
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Fieldmark Media
25 W. 43rd Street, Suite 707
New York, N.Y. 10036

CHICAGO:
VICE PRESIDENT, NATIONAL ACCOUNTS:
Dave Wishard

REGIONAL SALES MANAGERS:
Doug Koda
Phil Saran

Fieldmark Media
7366 N. Lincoln
Lincolnwood, Ill. 60646
312-673-6737

WEST COAST:
Sue Marritt

Fieldmark Media
16133 Ventura Blvd., Suite 1200
Encino, Calif. 91436
818-783-5888

FIELDMARK MEDIA
25 W. 43rd Street, Suite 707
New York, N.Y. 10036
212-354-5169

PRESIDENT AND PUBLISHER:
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VICE PRESIDENT, FINANCE:
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SUPERMARKET BUSINESS Magazine (ISSN 0196-5700) is published monthly by Sosland Publishing Co., 25 W. 43rd St., New York, N.Y. 10036. Telephone 212-354-5169. Circulated free of charge to grocery retailers and wholesalers. U.S. subscriptions $40 per year; Canada, $45 per year. Foreign subscriptions $55 (seamail), $205 (airmail), per year. Single copies $4 except Consumer Expenditures Study (September issue) $25 per copy. (Discount prices available on multiple purchases.)
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Second class postage paid at New York, N.Y. and additional mailing offices.

BPA ABP Association Of Business Publishers, Inc.

SUPERMARKET BUSINESS

VOLUME 42
NUMBER 11

NOVEMBER 1987

PART ONE
OF TWO PARTS

THE MARKETING WARFARE GAME: THE GATHERING STORM IN THE SOUTHEAST/BOB HUGHES & KEVIN COUPE 21

New marketing forces are bringing fast changes to supermarket retailing in the Southeast. Nowhere are the changes coming faster than in Savannah, where local ownership has fallen to the modern pressures of acquisition and fast growth.

A&P/JOHN UPDIKE 29

When a small publishing house went about creating cards with more than a short message, the result was a hybrid card/book. One tells of life—and love— in the checkout lane.

STOCKHOLM'S ÖSTERMALMSHALLEN: WHERE SWEDES SHOP FOR THE EXOTIC AND THE EVERYDAY/BOB HUGHES 33

This indoor marketplace in Stockholm provides reasonably priced perishables in the kind of setting many U.S. retailers are trying to create in their stores.

A CASEBOOK ON RALEY'S PROMOTIONS 36
BOB HUGHES

A look at how one chain organizes instore promotions, and how employee morale, customers, and the bottom line benefit as a result.

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AN ACCENT ON ETHNIC PRODUCTS SPURS INSTORE BAKERY SALES/LESLIE GILBERT 7A

More supermarkets are finding that ethnic bakery specialties bring character to the showcase and goodwill to the neighborhood.

IN MISSISSIPPI, SUNFLOWER SHINES ON JACKSON 11A
KEVIN COUPE & DANIEL ELMAN

When renovating its Sunflower supermarket, Lewis Grocer Co. kept the interests of its affluent customers in mind.

LIBERTY MARKET'S BAKERY SELLS OLD WORLD PRODUCTS IN A BRAND NEW SETTING/BOB HUGHES & TONY McGINTY 16A

Boston's Liberty Markets creates a handsome new setting for a bakery that features Italian-style breads and pastries.

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*in selected editions only

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IN ELECTRONICS, LOW MARGINS CAN ADD UP TO HIGH-VOLTAGE PROFITS/DANIEL ELMAN 41

There's money to be made in consumer electronics even if price competition forces margins down. A report on retailers who are selling televisions, radios, microwave ovens and more.

THE DO'S AND DON'T'S OF RUNNING A VIDEO RENTAL DEPARTMENT/KAREN L. JONES 49

Retailers with successful video rental departments offer advice—and cautions—on running a profitable instore operation.

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The newest corporately owned ShopRite in Philadelphia has built a strong nonfoods business for itself despite the presence of stores nearby competing for its customers.

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When this Florida couple tied the knot, they did it where they met—at the front end of a supermarket.

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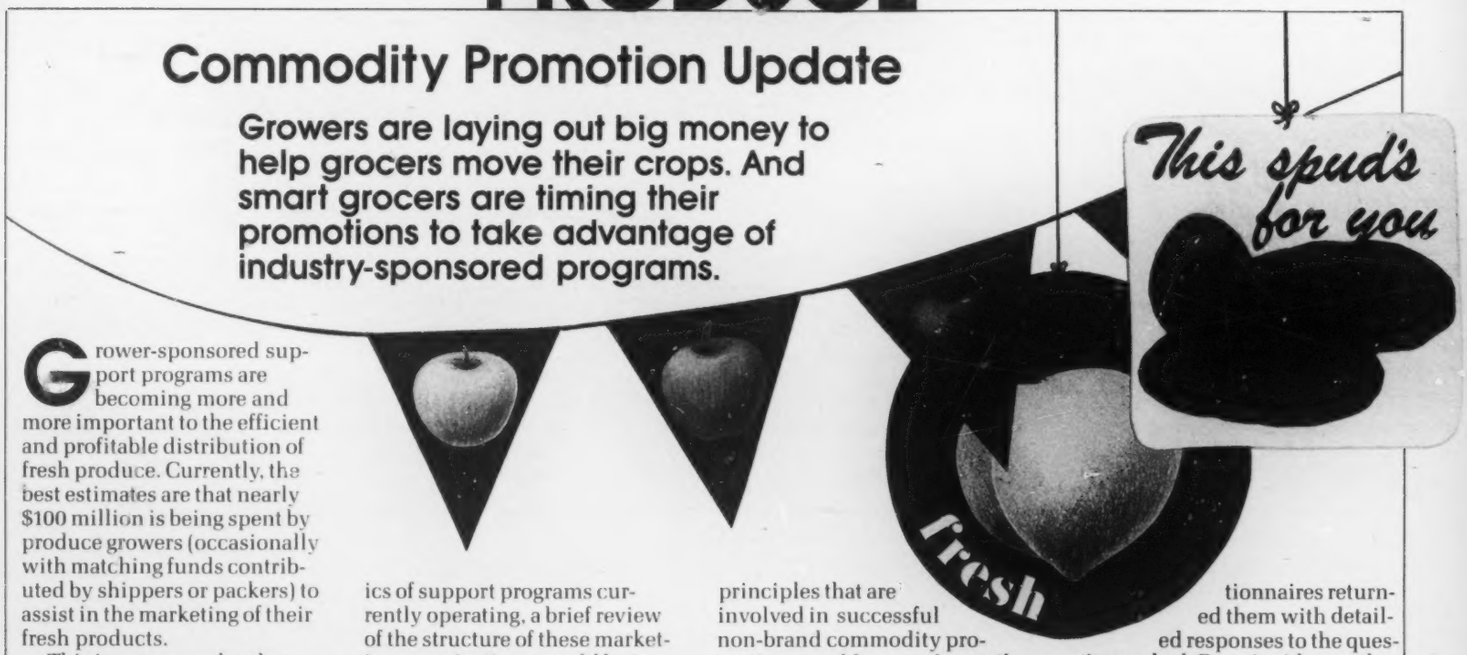
Commodity Promotion Update

Growers are laying out big money to help grocers move their crops. And smart grocers are timing their promotions to take advantage of industry-sponsored programs.

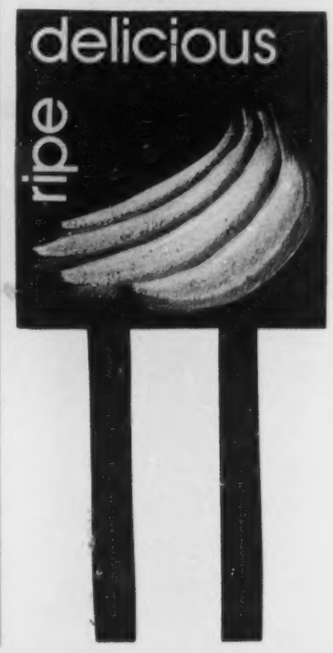


Grower-sponsored support programs are becoming more and more important to the efficient and profitable distribution of fresh produce. Currently, the best estimates are that nearly $100 million is being spent by produce growers (occasionally with matching funds contributed by shippers or packers) to assist in the marketing of their fresh products.

This is not a new development, but the size of many of these programs has become an important ingredient in successful marketing. Thirty years ago, a support program with $25,000 or $30,000 behind it was a substantial effort. Now it is common to see growers spend $1 million or more per year to help move their crops.

Most of these support programs still represent a very small percentage of the crop value, and industry organizations surveyed recently by SUPERMARKET BUSINESS continue to rely on proven techniques to gain maximum effect from the available dollars.

Before getting into the specifics of support programs currently operating, a brief review of the structure of these marketing organizations would be in order. "Marketing order" programs were started in the late 1930s as a way to help bring commodities out of the disastrously low-priced doldrums of the Depression. Growers of Washington state apples, Idaho potatoes and a number of California commodities initiated marketing support programs through state legislatures at that time. (These programs came into being when 51 percent of the growers representing two-thirds of the crop, or vice versa, voted to put them in place.) Since that time, a number of federal programs have been started, making it possible for products such as potatoes to be promoted regardless of the state of origin of the commodity. These organizations (state and federal) make up the majority of grower-supported programs.



Andrea L. Gallo

Others fall into two categories: major cooperatives such as Sunkist, Sun Maid, Sunsweet and others that have long supported their products with strong advertising and other marketing support programs; and voluntary associations such as the International Banana Association and the National Onion Association. (The co-ops will not be the subject of this article because, although producer-sponsored, their products really fall into the "brand" category, a subject that has been covered recently (see "Will Brand Marketing Succeed, Or Will It Spoil Fresh Produce?," SUPERMARKET BUSINESS, Feb. 1987, p. 21).)

There are a number of basic principles that are involved in successful non-brand commodity promotions, and frequently retailers and growers lose sight of them in the supply-demand-and-weather-controlled marketplace that can create such wild fluctuations in price. The bottom line is that growers and retailers, as well as the middlemen used along the way, must cooperate in order to market products that are completely satisfactory to the consuming public. No matter how excellent the quality of the product that is shipped may be, unless it is handled properly throughout the chain of distribution, it can end up at the consumer level as an inedible item. Or the reverse, of course, is also true; if fruit is shipped too green or too ripe, it's impossible to get it to the consumer in a way that will give a profitable return to both the grower and the retailer.

This principle extends to every aspect of commodity marketing. Promotion of these products is a shared responsibility .... education of the handlers along the line is a shared responsibility ... consumer education ... the development of improved packaging and shipping materials, the development of uniform sizes and quality standards, etc. should also be the joint responsibility of all segments of the distributive trades as well as the producing growers and shipping organizations.

Survey results

This brings us to the results of the informal survey taken of some 40 commodity promotion organizations. More than 50 percent of those receiving questionnaires returned them with detailed responses to the questions asked. By coincidence, the respondents could be neatly divided into four groups: those with budgets in excess of $1 million; those with budgets of $500,000 to $1 million; those with budgets of $100,000 to $500,000, and those with budgets of less than $100,000. Not unexpectedly, the way that these groups spend their promotional money is quite consistent within each group.

The categories covered by the questionnaire were consumer advertising, merchandising, trade communications, consumer public relations, instore incentives, food service and research. In general, the smaller groups concentrated on consumer public relations and merchandising, whereas the largest groups had much more balanced programs with substantial expenditures in consumer advertising.

For example, consumer advertising represented 44 percent of expenditures for groups that spend over $2 million per year; merchandising was 14 percent; trade communications, 4.5 percent; consumer public relations, 8 percent; instore incentives, 7 percent; food service programs, 7 percent; and research, 1.5 percent.

A chart of the expenditures

By Barney S. McClure, McClure & Associates

by these four groups is shown below. Although there was a definite pattern to the way the commodity programs spent their money, the content of the programs, the techniques used and the objectives of the different commodity groups varied based on the specific marketing problems each commodity faces.

Broadly, these commodities can be divided into those products that are extremely well known to virtually all consumers (apples, lettuce, peaches) and those that require a great deal of consumer education and, occasionally, even trade education for proper handling and use (such as kiwifruit, apricots, avocados.) For familiar produce, simply reminding the consuming public that the product is available, the price is right, and suggesting additional ways of using the product should result in increased sales. For those commodities where basic usage patterns have not been established, educating consumers about how to select, how to ripen and how to use the commodity are all extremely important. As a consequence, the kiwifruit industry, for example, uses instore demonstrations as a major way to help educate the public as well as to offer the retailer an incentive to handle a bigger volume of product. The California Lettuce Commission, on the other hand, puts most of its funding into direct retailer co-op advertising.

Even though some of the largest of these promotional programs are reaching the $7 to $10 million range, these are still modest promotional expenditures when billions of pounds of product are included in the category being promoted (The total expenditures of all the commodity programs put together would barely pay the advertising bill that Procter & Gamble pays every month.), thus the need for cooperation between producer and marketer. The grower can spend his promotional funds most effectively to educate the consumer through non-branded public relations efforts as well as instore signs and leaflets that will be targeted for distribution to the purchaser of the product. The retailer, thanks to the fact that produce has become the number one reason why consumers shop at one supermarket versus a competitor, can afford to devote substantial retail advertising space to produce to establish availability, price and quality in the customer's mind.

Other areas of promotion, like educating produce personnel through merchandising activities, and offering specific incentives to encourage the store-level produce manager to do a more conscientious and better job of handling and promoting the product, are generally considered to be joint

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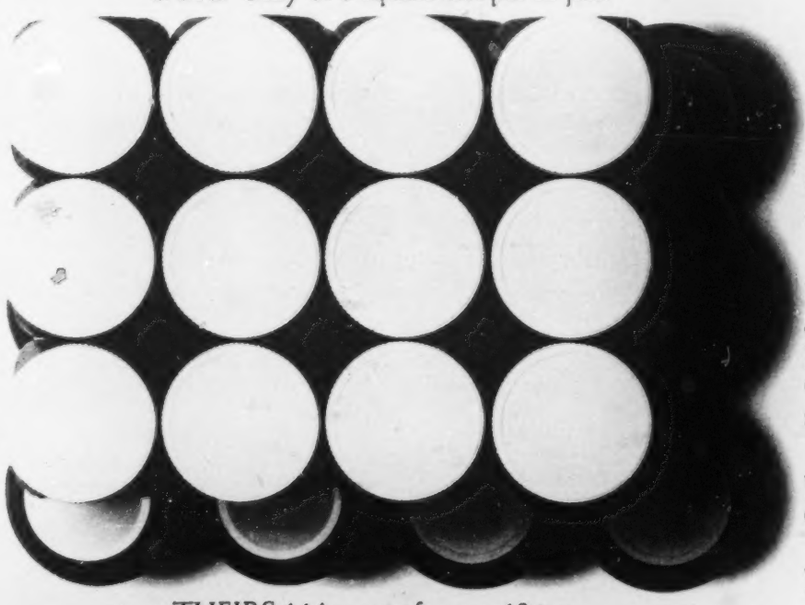
How Commodity Marketing Funds Are Spent

Activity	Group I $1,000,000 plus	Group II $500,000 to $1,000,000	Group III under $500,000	Group IV under $100,000
Consumer Advertising	44%	31%	5%	0
Merchandising	14%	26%	27%	42%
Trade Communications	4.5%	11%	10%	7%
Consumer PR	8%	6%	28%	31%
In-Store Incentives	7%	8%	22%	–5%
Food Service	7%	2.5%	5%	0
Research	1.5%	10%	3%	0

The spending plans of domestic product marketing programs. The balance of the expenditures went to export programs, while some groups apparently kept administrative costs as a non-reported percentage.

If You're Short On Shelf Space, Our New Jars Will Fit Right In.

OURS: Only 0.75 square feet per 12 jars.



THEIRS: 1.14 square feet per 12 jars.

Instead of wasting space, you could be saving it with our new Square Deal™ jars.

They're the first mustard jars with this unique square shape—a shape which delivers 60% more profit per square foot than the other national brand.

Plus, when you order our Square Deal™ jars, you'll get shrink-wrapped shipping trays that help lower display building and shelf stocking costs.

All of which will save you money throughout your distribution system.

As well as space in your stores.

SAMI UPDATE

HEALTH & BEAUTY AIDS: SAMI FOUR-WEEK FOOD STORE UNIT TRENDS VS. YEAR AGO

PRODUCT GROUP AND CATEGORY	% CHANGE VS. YEAR AGO 4 WEEKS ENDING 7/17/87	4 WEEKS ENDING 8/14/87	4 WEEKS ENDING 9/11/87
BABY NEEDS	**– 0.8%**	**+ 2.7%**	**– 0.4%**
Baby Powders	–11.7	– 5.3	– 9.7
Baby Oils, Creams & Lotions	+ 7.5	+16.1	+13.8
Infant Clothes	–20.5	–27.0	–32.0
Nursing Supplies	+ 0.7	+ 1.0	– 1.4
DEODORANTS	**+ 2.7%**	**+ 5.6%**	**+ 2.6%**
Sprays	– 3.4	– 3.9	– 2.5
Roll-Ons	+ 0.4	– 0.5	– 6.7
Stick Deodorants & Pads	+ 8.8	+13.1	+ 9.5
Creams	–16.7	–15.3	–13.6
Deodorants & Talcum Powders	+16.5	+30.0	+22.1
Feminine Hygiene Deodorants	+ 1.9	+ 0.8	+ 2.4
Foot Deodorants & Athlete's Foot Remedies	+10.6	+ 6.7	+ 3.4
Feminine Douches	– 0.5	+11.1	+ 6.9
FIRST AID	**+ 1.8%**	**+ 0.4%**	**+ 2.0%**
Antiseptics	+ 2.2	+ 5.3	+ 7.5
First Aid Products	+ 1.7	– 1.3	+ 0.2
HAIR CARE NEEDS	**+ 1.0%**	**+ 2.9%**	**+ 1.8%**
Shampoos	– 2.1	+ 0.4	– 2.3
Hair Sprays	+15.8	+15.8	+12.2
Hair Conditioning Rinses	– 7.1	+ 0.3	– 0.1
Hair Setting Needs	+ 8.2	+ 1.7	+13.7
Home Permanent Kits	– 7.4	–10.4	–19.5
Hair Coloring	– 5.5	– 4.5	– 2.5
Hair Dressing Needs	– 2.6	– 4.7	– 5.6
ORAL HYGIENE	**+ 4.2%**	**+ 6.6%**	**+ 1.5%**
Toothpastes & Powders	+ 2.5	+ 9.5	+ 1.1
Mouthwashes	+16.1	+15.4	+15.4
Breath Fresheners	– 0.5	– 2.9	– 3.1
Denture Cleaners	– 3.6	– 4.4	– 8.1
Denture Adhesives	– 3.3	– 3.2	– 3.8
Toothbrushes	+ 3.0	– 9.3	– 7.6
PROPRIETARY REMEDIES	**+ 2.4%**	**+ 1.5%**	**– 0.1%**
Antacids	+ 1.3	+ 2.2	+ 2.9
Internal Analgesics	+ 3.0	+ 3.4	+ 1.9
External Analgesics	+ 0.5	– 2.3	– 0.4
Cold Remedies	+ 1.3	– 0.8	– 9.9
Nasal Sprays—Drops—Inhalers	– 1.9	– 4.8	– 3.7
Chest Rubs	– 8.1	– 4.5	–13.7
Cough Remedies	– 0.3	– 1.3	– 6.4
Laxatives	+ 1.3	– 1.5	– 0.6
Sleeping Aids	+10.2	+ 9.6	+ 4.9
Tranquilizers	– 3.2	–13.1	– 5.6
Synthetic Vitamins	– 5.9	– 3.1	+ 4.0
Eye Care Products	+21.8	+15.8	+16.3
Appetite Suppressants	–14.7	–22.6	–18.7
SHAVING NEEDS	**+ 3.0%**	**– 4.4%**	**– 5.1%**
Shaving Creams	+ 1.4	– 6.5	+ 2.1
Pre-Shave Lotions	– 0.6	– 0.0	– 5.0
After-Shave Lotions	– 1.6	+ 1.7	– 1.0
Razor Blades	+ 4.3	– 3.8	– 7.8
Razors & Blades	– 0.6	–20.6	–24.5
SKIN CARE AIDS	**+ 7.5%**	**+ 8.3%**	**+ 9.7%**
Hand & Body Creams & Lotions	+ 7.9	+ 7.6	+14.3
Facial Preparations	– 5.8	– 9.3	–10.2
Lip Care Products	+31.6	+21.4	+21.4
Suntan Lotions & Oils	– 6.3	+13.3	+21.9
Cosmetic & Medicated Skin Aids	+12.2	+15.0	+11.8
TOTAL ALL CATEGORIES	**+ 2.7%**	**+ 3.1%**	**+ 4.1%**

HBA Has Strongest Dollar Gains in September Reporting Period

Continued strong performance of skin care aids contributes to an HBA sales gain that outpaces all other product departments.

BY ALAN MILLER JR.

Fall sales of health and beauty aids (HBA) got off to a very good start as dollar volume among all HBA products tracked in SAMI's most recent reporting period rose 4.1 percent over the corresponding period a year ago. This rate of gain compares favorably with the 3.1 percent increase for frozen foods and a 2.2 percent improvement among refrigerated foods, and represents a significantly higher growth rate than the gains made by dry grocery-nonfood (+1.5 percent) and shelf stable food products (+0.3 percent). The HBA dollar gain rate of 4.8 percent on an annual basis is also the strongest improvement among all product departments. Only the 4.2 percent 52-week increase for refrigerated foods comes close to the pace set by HBA.

On a tonnage basis, the four-week unit gain of 1.1 percent for HBA items is exceeded only by the 1.2 percent tonnage gain for refrigerated foods. There were tonnage declines in the most recent reporting period for both the dry grocery and frozen food departments amounting to 0.2 percent and 1.5 percent respectively.

Five of the eight HBA product groups recorded four-week volume gains including a whopping 9.7 percent increase for the skin care aids group. The sharpest loss was the 5.1 percent drop for shaving needs as a result of accelerating weakness for razor blades, which are not benefiting from category-expanding new product launches.

Twenty-four HBA categories showed increased volume; slightly more, 28, showed declining volume. There were three product categories with four-week national food store unit-volume increases in excess of 20 percent: deodorant and talcum powder (+22.1 percent), suntan lotion and oil (+21.9 percent) and lip care products (+21.4 percent). There were only two product categories with loss rates of this magnitude—infant clothes (-32.0 percent) and razors and blades (-24.5 percent).

Baby products decline

Three of the four baby needs categories recorded declines for both the four-week and 52-week periods. Baby powder volume dropped 9.7 percent for the most recent four-week period, but as a result of new line extensions in the Johnson & Johnson stable and the introduction of Baby Magic Rich N' Creamy, volume among baby oils, creams and lotions rose 13.8 percent, or almost enough to erase the declines for infant clothes, nursing supplies and baby powders.

The best track record in the personal deodorant product

SAMI UPDATE

group was achieved by deodorant and talcum powders; Shower to Shower was the standout brand in the category. Stick deodorants/antiperspirants are continuing to build share in this product group, and the four-week growth rate of 9.5 percent is higher than the annual unit increase of 8.9 percent. Sprays (-2.5 percent), roll-ons (-6.7 percent) and creams (-13.6 percent) can trace their downward paths to the ascent of the sticks. There were gains within this product group for feminine douches/washes (+6.9 percent), foot deodorants/athlete's foot remedies (+3.4 percent) and feminine hygiene deodorants (+2.4 percent). Unit sales in all eight of these categories combined advanced 2.6 percent, or higher than the annual increase of 2.0 percent.

Both first aid categories showed upward trends for the 28-day span, with unit movement of first aid antiseptics ahead 7.5 percent and first aid products up 0.2 percent for a combined product group trend of +2.0 percent.

Five of the seven hair care needs categories registered negative trends, for both the four-week and 52-week periods. Four-week gains of 12.2 percent for hair sprays and 13.7 percent for hair setting needs, however, were instrumental in bringing about a net gain of 1.8 percent for the product group as a whole. The most worrisome trend in terms of magnitude of loss was the 19.5 percent reversal among home permanent kits. Hair dressing needs, which are predominantly men's grooming products, and ethnic hair preparations fell 5.6 percent. Hair coloring volume in food stores retreated 2.5 percent. Shampoo sales fell more than half a million units in the period, representing a decline rate of 2.3 percent. The loss rate for hair conditioning rinses, however, was down only 0.1 percent, representing a 28-day drop of just 9,000 units.

Four of the six categories of oral hygiene products had sales declines. The figure was 8.1 percent for denture cleaners and 7.6 percent for toothbrushes. New product activity in both the mouthwash and toothpaste categories, however, was sufficient to cause the product group as a whole to record a gain amounting to 1.5 percent.

Appetite suppressants drop

All of the four over-the-counter cough and cold remedy categories suffered sales losses versus the corresponding period one year ago: chest rubs (-13.7 percent), cold remedies (-9.9 percent), cough remedies (-6.4 percent) and nasal spray-drops-inhalers (-3.7 percent). As usual, the best performance in the proprietary remedies categories was turned in by eye care products, a category with a positive trend amounting to 16.3 percent or slightly higher than the 14.9 percent gain for the full year. Both synthetic (+4.0 percent) and natural vitamins, minerals and supplements (+6.8 percent) were in the plus column, as were sleeping aids (+4.9 percent), antacids (+2.9 percent) and internal analgesics (+1.9 percent). The highest loss rate both near-term and long-term is developing in the appetite suppressants category, where the most recent decline amounted to 18.7 percent. In all 14 categories combined, the loss was 0.1 percent.

Four of the five categories of shaving needs had minus volume, and the only gain was among shaving creams (+2.1 percent). As noted in previous columns, a dearth of new products helps to account for this unimpressive showing. The 7.8 percent drop in razor blade units for the four weeks amounts to a decline of nearly one million units.

Once again, the most impressive sales improvement came in the skin care aids group, where the only chronic area of sales doldrums is once again found in the facial preparations category. The other four categories in this product group all enjoyed double-digit rates of gain: suntan lotion and oil (+21.9 percent), lip care products (+21.4 percent), hand and body creams/lotions (+14.3 percent) and cosmetic and medicated skin aids (+11.8 percent). ■

When it comes to topical pain relief stock Americaine®.

For over 42 years hospitals and pharmacists have recommended Americaine topical anesthetic for cuts, scrapes, burns, insect bites and minor skin irritations. They've dispensed Americaine hemorrhoidal ointment for relief from the pain and itching of hemorrhoids. These health-care professionals know that Americaine contains 20% benzocaine pain reliever — no other topical anesthetic contains more. This history provides Americaine with a proven track record and a loyal customer base.

Now, Pharmacraft introduces Americaine to consumers, women 25-54, with a complete media program including national television, FSI and print. The Pennwalt Prescription sales force will detail Americaine to hospitals and pediatricians. The message is repeated in medical journal advertising.

Over 42 years of hospital heritage. Part of the growing first aid category. Excellent margins and allowances. When it comes to profitable topical pain relievers, stock Americaine.

Americaine®
Stops the pain.

PENNWALT CORP
PHARMACRAFT DIVISION
ROCHESTER, NY 14623

PRODUCE

Continued from page 18

responsibilities of the producer/shipper and retailer.

Researching the most effective means of influencing the consumer has traditionally been an exclusive responsibility of the grower groups.

Instore incentives

This brings us to what has become a controversial subject within the commodity promotion programs. This is broadly grouped in the survey under "instore incentives." This category includes many of the traditional incentive programs that have been used for years by commodity boards (30/30 or tagged radio or television spots, regional or national display contests, one-chain contests for display or other purposes) but the growing trend, initiated largely by retailers, is the direct contribution by commodity programs to retail advertising costs.

In the survey, only three of 19 responding commodity boards have gone to direct co-op advertising payments to chains based on criteria established by the commodity boards themselves. (Three or four others, not responding to the survey, do as well.) Interestingly, the three that do spend on co-op advertising are not all in the group with the most money to spend. The reasons commodity programs don't participate directly with retail advertising are several:

☐ Few of the boards or commissions have budgets large enough to finance co-op advertising with supermarket chains in every part of the country. For example, five to 10 cents is the range of most of the assessment rates per lug of product or 100 pounds of potatoes, and assuming two cents would be as heavy an investment in co-op advertising as most boards could make, a 100-store chain that purchases 50 packages of product per store to support an advertised feature, might receive $100 from the commodity program as an advertising incentive. This would hardly be a major influence in a chain's decision to promote that commodity. The same $100 could deliver a four-color point-of-purchase (POP) kit to each one of these 100 chain outlets.

☐ The commodity program cannot tie the support materials supplied to the retail trade directly to sales, in that in some cases there are hundreds of suppliers and no major buyer is supplied exclusively from one commodity source.

☐ Commodity prices are too volatile. As the president of one of the major commodity boards stated recently, "When the cost of a flat of our product drops from $8 to $4, we consider that the retailer has already been supplied with a considerable advertising allowance to promote our product." Manufactured, packaged grocery items that do include sizeable advertising or promotional incentives as part of their marketing program do so on the basis of maintaining a base price and offering advertising or promotional incentives as a discount off that price in order to get product moving when sales slow. This, of course, is not true of fresh fruit and vegetable products. In perishables, supply and demand can drop the price by 50 percent or more when peak volume is shipped and with the number of producers involved in virtually all commodities, it's impossible to maintain a "base price."

☐ The type of advertising featured by different chains can vary from heavy investments in television (with production costs alone that would bankrupt many of the medium- to small-sized commodity programs) to four-color mailers that are produced in the millions and must be committed to long before many commodity budgets are even known. This creates an impossible situation in terms of a fair allocation of funds depending on the type of advertising program chains use.

Selling specialty items

The chief arguments in favor of direct advertising support could apply to specialty items, some of which do use this device as a way to stimulate more advertising coverage. Avocado and kiwifruit growers have used direct support for retail advertising to help expand the market for their products. On a much larger scale, the California Iceberg Lettuce Commission has devoted a considerable part of its program to direct cooperative advertising, based on extensive research that has shown exactly how often and what type of advertising is used by different chains across the country. With this background information in hand, and a budget large enough to support national programs in this area, the commission has had great success in expanding the amount of retail advertising that is devoted to iceberg lettuce.

For most commodities, however, the traditional approaches are considerably more effective in terms of commodity sales as well as the kinds of support that can be given to the retail handlers of their product. As a consequence, the major programs invest heavily in network television and radio, spot market advertising (usually "tagged" with retailer names as an incentive), extremely powerful national and regional public relations programs that result in millions of dollars worth of editorial coverage of the commodities involved and the efficient mass production and distribution of four-color POP materials, recipe leaflets and educational materials.

Overall, it seems that commodity programs are continuing to expand the dollars they invest in marketing support functions. Again, both California and New Zealand kiwifruit are prime examples of commodity programs that have helped build a completely unknown product in a few short years to a profitable year-round product for chains in all parts of the country.

There is hardly a produce commodity today that is not supported by funds contributed by the growers of each one of these products to help the distributive trades do a bigger, better and more profitable job of selling the products they produce. ■

COVER STORY

Continued from page 26

sures of acquisition and bottom-line results.

Take, for example, Smith Brothers, on Habersham Avenue, a 9,000-square-foot store that operates from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. just five days a week (it closes on Wednesdays and Sundays). Renowned for its meats and for its personalized service—W.C. Lancaster, the company vice president who has been with Smith Brothers for some four decades, says that it used to be said that to be "in" in Savannah, "you had to attend Christ Church, send your kids to the Country Day School, and shop at Smith Brothers"—the store is not changing its ways.

"I don't think any chain has too much of an effect on Smith Brothers," Lancaster says. "We've had our inclines and our decreases. Of course, when Kroger opened their first store here, it took us almost a year to recover, and we weren't the only ones."

Well, not entirely steady. There recently was a small fluctuation in business at Smith Brothers. After decades of operation as a single unit, the ownership decided to open a second one, on nearby Skidaway Island. And while the move probably doesn't have M&M, Kroger, Food Lion and Sam's Wholesale Club rethinking their marketing strategies, it is nice to know that some of the local folks aren't conceding anything to anyone. ■

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